

9-14-1806

Letter to Elezer Jenks Sept 14 1806

Moses Greenleaf

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Bangor Sept 14th 1806

1806

Sept. 14

A pressure of various circumstances made me neglect you last week & some unpleasant tidings from East Andover has put writing out of Dennis' head - which is by way of apology to yourself & Clara -

To reply methodically to your letter, Eliza comes first on the tapis. I agree with you that he had better "follow Old Ned," under present appearances, but should they change, a refuge may be found in the "land of promise" my solicitude for him has been grounded on the idea that his owners finding him a good mate might wish to keep him there, & perhaps he might stay till it was too late - but if he does well - as well as he deserves - I shall feel happier to hear of him thus, than to see him retreat to the words mortified & disappointed, & perhaps regret that I have persuaded him from good business to a life which may not suit him.

I had noticed Brim's secession from the establishment, & was at a loss to account for it, but as you say, in this age of revolutions nothing ought to surprise us. I have experienced too many of these vicissitudes to be startled at them & my experience has convinced me that such are not evils. So far from it that almost all the good I have enjoyed for these seven years, has been elicited from seeming ill & though I now consider my present situation & prospects, as happier & brighter than they have ever been heretofore, yet I have been forced into it by what the ignorant & misjudging would call misfortune - the consequence is that I believe all apparent ill to result in real good. The transfer is easily made from "the great whole" to your particular case. May it not be that Infinite Wisdom, designing the greatest possible good, has so disposed of events that, instead of suffering you to protract a laborious anxious profession, in which the "prospect before us" promises nothing on which the mind can rest with satisfaction, he has ton you from it while you are in the full possession of all your powers, that they may all have their share of action, & some faculties called forth to make a figure, which otherwise must have rusted in obscurity. I do not know your particular views, but suppose that your profession, merchandize or some business which furnishes a regular stipend, must include all the possible chances - in of these the two former are overdone - done to death - the latter is too limited & precarious, to satisfy an enterprising mind, & any mind which could put up with dependence, unless as the result of dire necessity, when an opportunity offers to throw off the yoke - must be either criminally negligent in the discharge of his duty - or too imbecile & obdurate to deserve or be safely trusted with the loom. The happiness of your family may require that you engage in some business where all the conveniences of society, alias a throng, are to be found, & where ^{on} a limited view of things, it will appear that the opportunity of educating your children will acquire a manner

as to qualify them for any sphere in which they be called to act, is to be found & there only. But, what extraneous circumstances are necessary to happiness? Is it continual intercourse with a multitude the greater part of whom you must cordially despise? Is it placing your children at schools, where with the rudiments of science they will also imbibe the vices of their companions? Where the distraction of a variety of objects & the fascinations of what is misnamed society will preclude them from any but superficial attainments. Are the petty luxuries of the table - the convenience of smooth roads - be be objects of solicitude? I am certain there are not so to you. What then?

Independence - Competence - Dignity & Respectability. My plan affords the means of attaining all these with the least possible chance of failure. I have not developed to any one the extent of my views, nor the strong & increasing probabilities I have of success. It would be hardly possible for me to detail the whole on paper. I shall therefore reserve it for the subject of another Sunday's ride.

Society may be found, by those who know its true value, & are qualified to enjoy it, any where. & when "two or three are gathered together" of congenial tastes habits & dispositions, ~~particulary~~ particularly when they are thrown together by similar circumstances, a society is formed at once. - & if they possess cultivated understandings, with a sufficient knowledge of the world, & hearts tempered in the furnace, the societies to be found in prosperous cities enjoy not half their happiness. However improbable it may appear to you, who draw your analogies from that part of the country which is under your more immediate observation, a society will in a very few years, be found north of the Piscataway which will approach nearer to your own ideas of the useful & agreeable than any which I am acquainted with in any of the country towns in Maine.

Admitting this, you may yet object - what are our children to do in the interim? their opportunity for education must not be neglected. I grant it. But can not even a few furnish the means of instruction to their children for a year or two until regular schools can be established? & What difficulties are insuperable to those determined to conquer them? I am persuaded that when the subject is accurately & closely examined the "obstacles" you mentioned will dissolve into "air, thin air" & the bugbear terms "wildness" "savages" &c &c will be remanded to the "place from whence they came," there to dwell with "ghosts" "hobgoblins" &c &c in - "old women's notions"

I have made something of a preachment to you, hope you ^{will} be endowed with grace to make a wise application. & in this hope remain cordially your friend. Another

Moses

To Clara - Lewis promised to fill the remainder of the sheet, but
having an opportunity to send this away immediately I can only
say "time is short" while she is undressing Eben, who reads stoutly -
Congratulate you on the accession of Master Charles Henry to your family -
a great deal of love & affection intend to visit the "hive" some time or
other - can't say when - ~~and~~ good night

Mr. Greenleaf Bangs

Sept. 1846

New Gloucester

Mr. Roger Jenkins